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*Essais sur la conception matérialiste de l'histoire.* By ANTONIO LABRIOLA. With a preface by G. SOREL. Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1897. 12mo, pp. 348.

OF these two essays the first (*En memoire du Manifeste du parti communiste*) recalls the attention to what was the meaning, in its author's mind, of the phrase which affords the title of this book. This central Marxian position says that the exigencies of the industrial process determine the features of the society's life process in all its other aspects—social, political, and intellectual. The rest of what the famous *Manifesto* has to say is to be read in the light of this principle which gives the socialist point of view. All the rest, even the doctrine of the class struggle and the Marxian theory of surplus-value, is by comparison provisional and tentative, although in point of fact, it is held, the whole of this further development of the theory is substantially correct. The office of this "materialistic conception" is that of a guiding principle (*Leitfaden*) in the study of social life and of social structure. These economic exigencies afford the definitive test of fitness in the adaptation of all human institutions by a process of selective elimination of the economically unfit. They also, through the industrial process through which they work their effect, determine the development of thought and science; the materialistic conception is itself, at the second remove, a product of the industrial process.

The second essay (*Le matérialisme historique*) expands and expounds this position further; and it reiterates, with an insistence that sometimes grows tedious, that, "given the conditions of the development of industry and its appliances, the economic structure of society will determine . . . primarily and directly all the rest of the practical activity of the members, as well as the variations of this activity, which are met within the process that we call history—that is to say, the formation, dissensions, conflicts, and erosion of classes. . . . And it determines, secondarily, also the tendency, and in an indirect way, in great part, the objects which shall occupy thought and fancy, in art, religion, and science" (p. 239).

The book is notable not as a unique presentation of its thesis nor as a new departure in economic speculation, but as being, on the contrary, a typical example of the theoretical position at present occupied by socialist writers. For the theoretical writers among the socialists, and for the popular discussion in a less pronounced degree, socialist economics no longer revolves about the labor-value dogma that did

such ubiquitous service for the propaganda in its day. Nor is the class-struggle dogma any longer so unfaltering a recourse as it once was, even among the Marxists of the stricter observance. These doctrines and their various ramifications are to an extent giving way before an interpretation of the materialistic conception which does not, in its fundamental position, go much beyond a conception of the evolution of social structure according to which the economic activities, and the habits bred by them, determine the activities and the habitual view of things in other directions than the economic one. And in this development the socialists are drawing close to the position of a large and increasing class of economists who are accepting the materialistic conception, or so much of it as is conveniently to be affiliated with Darwinism, whether they accept it under the style and title approved by their socialist mentors or under designations chosen by themselves. These economists of the new evolutionist or socialist departure are nowhere more numerous or more favorably received than among Professor Labriola's countrymen.

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THORSTEIN B. VEBLEN.

*Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert.* By WERNER SOMBART. With a chronological table of the social movement from 1750 to 1896. Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1896. 8vo, pp. 143.

IN the course of eight lectures Professor Sombart gives a survey and characterization of the socialist movement and the theories of the socialists from the point of view of an economist who stands outside the movement and still is not out of sympathy with it. The motive force of the movement is found (pp. 7-12) to be the sense of injury and of the precariousness of existence which pervades the proletariat of today, pushed to active measures by a propensity for revolutionary disturbance. This revolutionary propensity is of the nature of a nervous affection and comes of the excessive rush and strain of modern life. That this restless impulse to agitation and revolution has definitively taken the specific direction of the Marxian social democracy is due to the temperament of the German population and the work of Karl Marx (p. 62). There is a large personal element of leadership in socialism. The work of Marx which has so profoundly affected the character of the latter-day social movement consists substantially in an unfaltering realism applied to social and economic speculation. This